

MINUTES

**MONTANA SENATE
58th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON SENATE BILL 487

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN ROYAL JOHNSON**, on April 23, 2003 at
9:20 A.M., in Room 422 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Royal Johnson, Chairman (R)
Rep. Rod Bitney, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Rick Laible (R)
Rep. Scott Mendenhall (R)
Sen. Gerald Pease (D)
Rep. Veronica Small-Eastman (D)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Marian Collins, Secretary
Jeff Martin, Legislative Staff

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: SB 487, 4/22/2003
Executive Action: AMEND FURTHER

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0.3 - 8.5}

SEN. JOHNSON proposed amendments in Exhibit 1, and explained to the Conference Committee that amendments 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 take wording out of the bill that was put in on the House floor. Amendment 4 adds that wording into the bill.

EXHIBIT (frh86hb0487a01)

SEN. LAIBLE stated that he likes the amendments and feels that they bring the bill back to where it originally was with a little refinement. **SEN. PEASE** agrees with the amendments, and believes it is a good bill again. **REP. MENDENHALL** stated that he understands that these amendments are a compromise and will allow for a broader application. **REP. SMALL-EASTMAN** stated that the proposed amendments make this a better bill for the Crow Tribe and for economic development in the area. **REP. BITNEY** stated that the amendments should work well.

SEN. JOHNSON stated that the Senate Majority Leader requested permission to read a statement at the Hearing today.

Without objection, **SEN. FRED THOMAS** stated that these amendments are good and hope that they will be adopted. He felt that the intent of the Committee adding the language in Section 7 of Senate Bill 487 is to encourage the Board of Investments to recognize the importance of the transferred Otter Creek coal tracts to the State of Montana by inviting applications for project financing related to infrastructure and facilities necessary for the development of the State of Montana-owned coal assets in the Otter Creek area. The economic importance of these coal assets to the economy and the State of Montana School Trust is a priority. In order for the State of Montana to maximize the return to the State of Montana School Trust, it will be necessary to develop generation, transmission, rail and other related facilities to encourage the economic development of the Otter Creek coal assets. The State of Montana recognizes that these infrastructure needs are interdependent and are required for the orderly, integrated and timely development of this important State of Montana coal asset.

EXHIBIT (frh86hb0487a02)

Motion/Vote: **SEN. PEASE** moved **ADOPTION OF THE AMENDMENTS**. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

Motion/Vote: **SEN. PEASE** moved **SB 487 DO PASS AS AMENDED**. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 9:32 A.M.

SEN. ROYAL JOHNSON, Chairman

MARIAN COLLINS, Secretary

RJ/MC